

Glossary of Hawaiian Words¹

The Hawaiian translations are from Pukui and Elbert (1986). For some of the words a more contemporary meaning may be used by Hawaiians today; for these words they are placed before the Pukui and Elbert (1986) translations and marked with “(common).”

The ‘okina and the kahakō are diacritical markings that are part of the Hawaiian alphabet and used in the Hawaiian words. The ‘okina, or glottal stop, is found only between two vowels or at the beginning of a word that starts with a vowel. A break in speech is created between the sounds of the two vowels. The pronunciation of the ‘okina in the word Kāko’o is similar to saying “ka-koh-oh.” The kahakō is found only above a vowel. It stresses or elongates a vowel sound from one beat to two beats. The kahakō is written as a line above a vowel. There are differing pronunciations of some words depending on the area or island.

Hawaiian Word	English Translation
‘aha moku	A system of best practices based on indigenous resource management practices within specific moku (district) boundaries to sustain resources and the community of that moku A series of district councils that would manage land and natural resources for tenants and the community through the implementation of site specific cultural conservation coupled by utilitarian practices.
ahupua‘a	Land division usually extending from the uplands to the sea, so called because the boundary was marked by a heap (ahu) of stones surmounted by an image of a pig (pua‘a), or because a pig or other tribute was laid on the altar as tax to the chief.
akua ki‘i	Image representing a god.
‘āina	Land.
ali‘i	Chief, chiefess, officer, ruler, monarch, peer, headman, noble, aristocrat, king, queen, commander.
‘ama‘ama	Mullet (<i>Mugil cephalus</i>), a very choice indigenous fish.
‘aumakua	Family of personal gods, deified ancestors who might assume the shape of sharks, owls, hawks [etc.]. A symbiotic relationship existed; mortals did not harm or eat ‘aumakua, and ‘aumakua warned and reprimanded mortals in dreams, visions, and calls. Aumākua—plural of ‘aumakua.
‘auwai	Ditch, canal, water conveyance channels
awa	Milkfish (<i>Chanos chanos</i>).
hala	Pandanus or screw pine (<i>Pandanus odoratissimus</i>).
hālau	Meeting house.
hau	Lowland tree (<i>Hibiscus tiliaceus</i>), found in many warm countries, some spreading horizontally over the ground forming impenetrable

¹ Glossary adapted from the proposed He‘eia National Estuarine Research Reserve draft management plan (2016)

Hawaiian Word	English Translation
	thickets, and some trained on trellises.
heiau	Pre-Christian place of worship, shrine; some heiau were elaborately constructed stone platforms, others simple earth terraces. Many are preserved today.
kalo	Taro (<i>Colocasia esculenta</i>), a kind of aroid cultivated since ancient times for food, spreading widely from the tropics of the Old World. In Hawai'i, taro has been the staple from earliest times to the present, and here its culture developed greatly, including more than 300 forms.
konohiki	Overseer, headman of an ahupua'a land division under the chief; land or fishing rights under control of the konohiki.
kuapā	Wall of a fish pond.
kuāuna	Taro patch walls (common). Bank or border of a taro patch; stream bank.
kuleana	Native Hawaiian land rights (common). Right, privilege, concern, responsibility, title, business, property, estate, portion, jurisdiction, authority, liability, interest, claim, ownership, tenure, affair, province.
kupuna, kūpuna	Elders (common). Grandparent, ancestor, relative or close friend of the grandparent's generation, grandaunt, granduncle. Kūpuna—plural of kupuna.
limu	Seaweed, algae (common)
lo'i	Irrigated terrace, especially for taro, but also for rice; paddy.
lo'i kalo	Irrigated taro patch.
loko i'a	Fishpond (common).
loko i'a kalo	Combined fishpond and taro patch.
mākāhā	Sluice gate, as of a fishpond; entrance to or egress from an enclosure.
makai	Toward the sea.
mauka	Toward the mountain.
moku	District, island, islet, section.
mo'olelo	Story, tale, myth, history, tradition, literature, legend, journal, log, yarn, fable, essay, chronicle, record, article; minutes, as of a meeting. (From mo'o 'ōlelo, succession of talk; all stories were oral, not written.)
poi	The Hawaiian staff of life, made from cooked taro corms, or rarely breadfruit, pounded and thinned with water.
'uala	Sweet potato (<i>Ipomoea batatas</i>).
uhi	Yam (<i>Dioscorea alata</i>).
wahi pana	Celebrated, noted, or legendary place.
wai	Fresh water (common).
waiwai	Wealth, abundance, prosperity.

Common and Scientific Names for Plants and Animals

Common Names		Possible Scientific Names		Source
Hawaiian	Other	Genus	Species	
'a'ama	crab	<i>Grapsus</i>	<i>grapsus</i>	Pukui and Elbert 1986
āholehole	juvenile āhole (Hawaiian flagtail)	<i>Kuhlia</i>	<i>xenura</i>	Hoover 1993
'anae	Striped mullet (full-sized)	<i>Mugil</i>	<i>cephalus</i>	Hoover 1993
'ama'ama	striped mullet	<i>Mugil</i>	<i>cephalus</i>	Hoover 1993
awa	milkfish	<i>Chanos</i>	<i>chanos</i>	Hoover 1993
haole (kūhonu)	white crab	<i>Portunus</i>	<i>sanguinolentus</i>	Pukui and Elbert 1986
hau	beach hibiscus	<i>Hibiscus</i>	<i>tiliaceus</i>	Wagner et al. 1999
kalo	taro	<i>Colocasia</i>	<i>esculenta</i>	Wagner et al. 1999
kūhonu	crab	<i>Portunus</i>	<i>sanguinolentus</i>	Pukui and Elbert 1986
limu 'ele'ele	seaweed, algae	<i>Enteromorpha</i>	<i>prolifera</i>	Abbott and Williamson 1974
limu huluhuluwaena	seaweed, algae	<i>Grateloupia</i>	<i>filicina</i>	Abbott and Williamson 1974
limu kohu	seaweed, algae	<i>Asparagopsis</i>	<i>taxiformis</i>	Abbott and Williamson 1974
limu manauea	seaweed, algae, Ogo	<i>Gracilaria</i>	<i>coronopifolia</i>	Abbott and Williamson 1974
māmaki	an endemic nettle	<i>Pipturus</i>	spp.*	Wagner et al. 1999
manini	convict tang	<i>Acanthurus</i>	<i>triostegus</i>	Hoover 1993
'ō'io	bonefish	<i>Albula</i>	spp.*	Hoover 1993
'ōlena	turmeric	<i>Curcuma</i>	<i>domestica</i>	Pukui and Elbert 1986
'ōpae lōlō	brackish-water shrimp or prawn	<i>Penaeus</i>	<i>marginatus</i>	Pukui and Elbert 1986
weke	goatfish	<i>Mulloidichthys</i>	spp.*	Hoover 1993

* spp. = multiple species